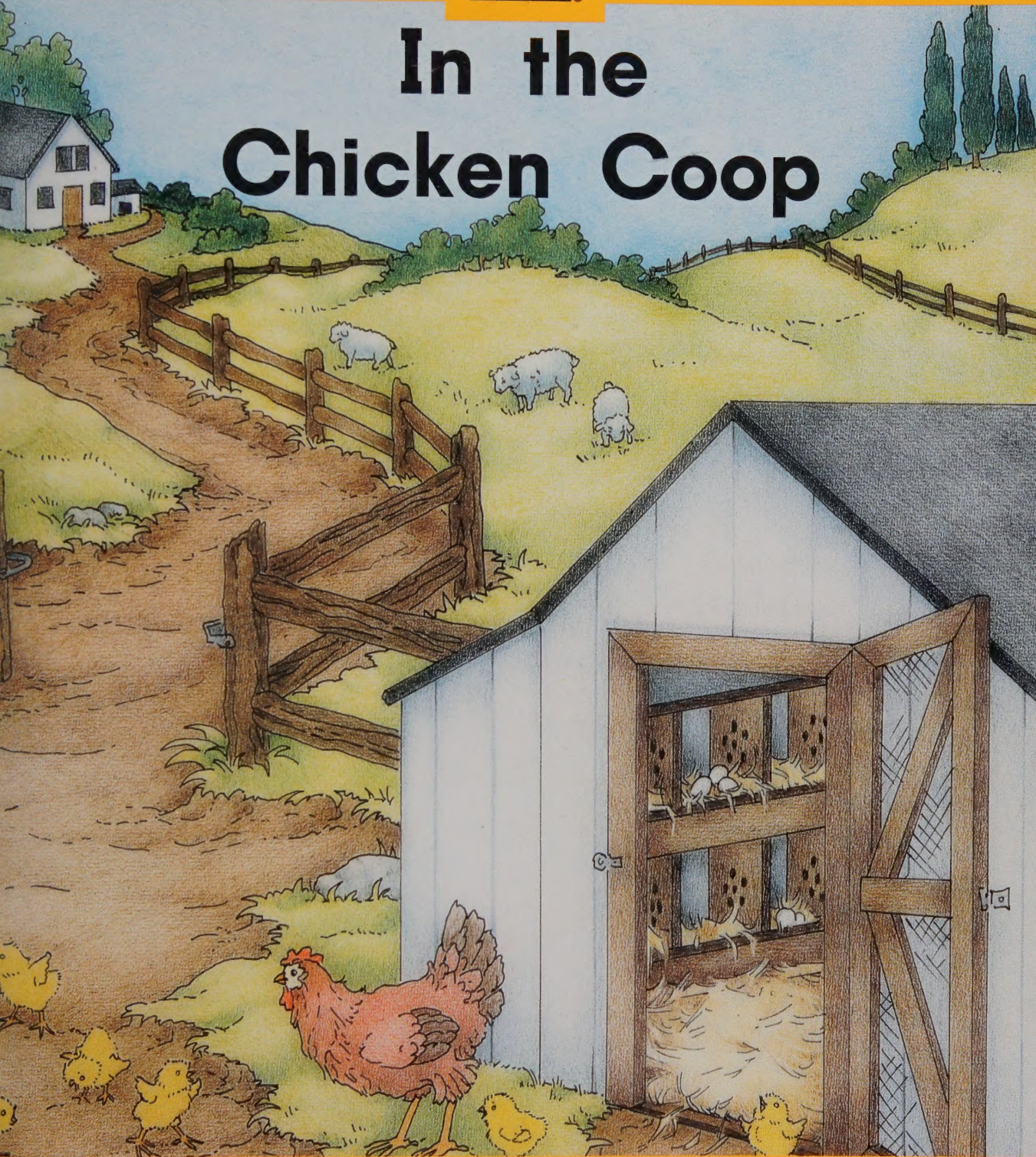


# In the Chicken Coop



By Miriam Frost  
Illustrated by Kristine Bollinger



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Text by Miriam Frost  
Illustrations by Kristine Bollinger

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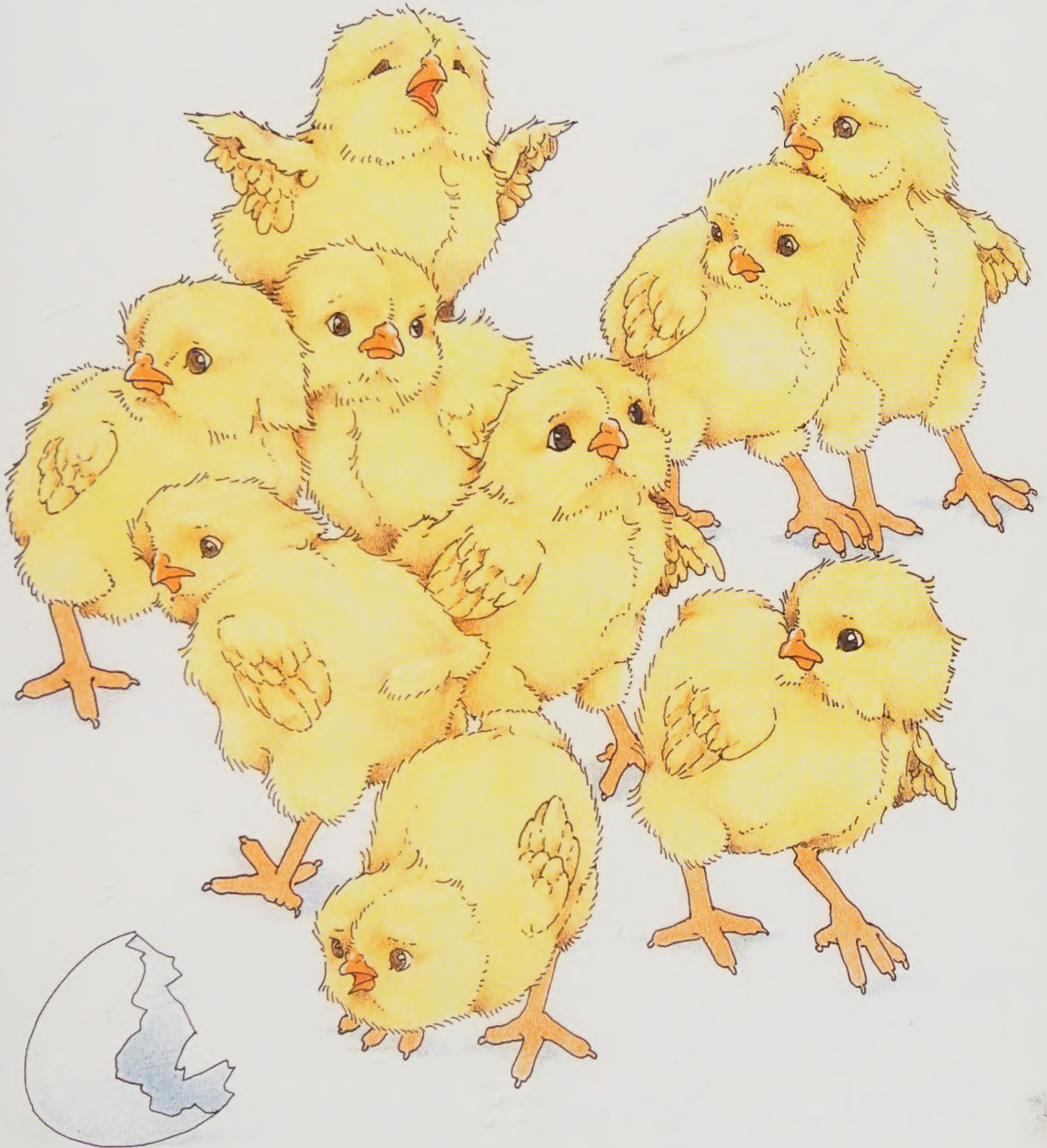
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**Scratch, scratch, scratch  
went the mother hen.**







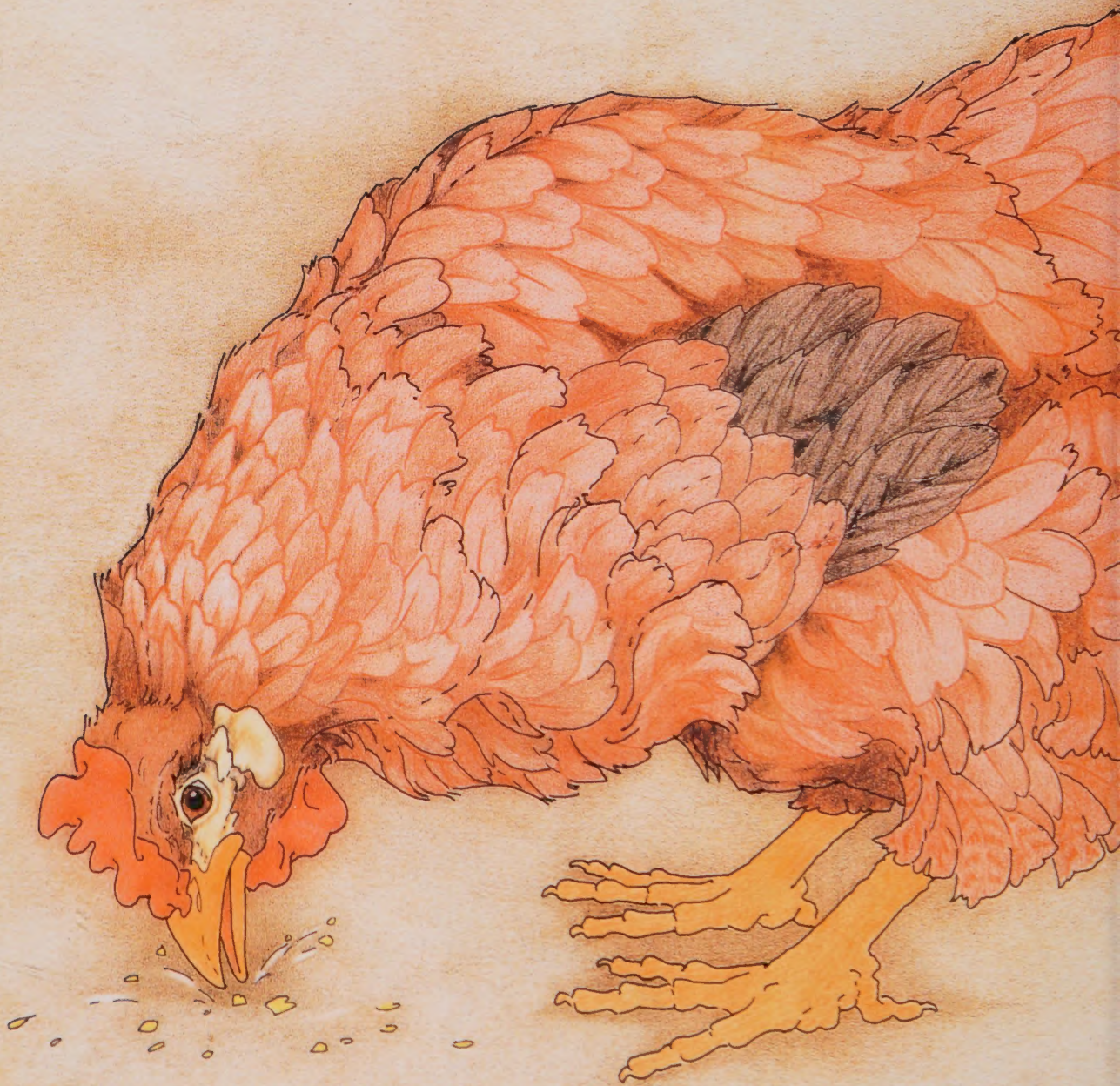


**Scratch, scratch, scratch  
went the little chicks.**



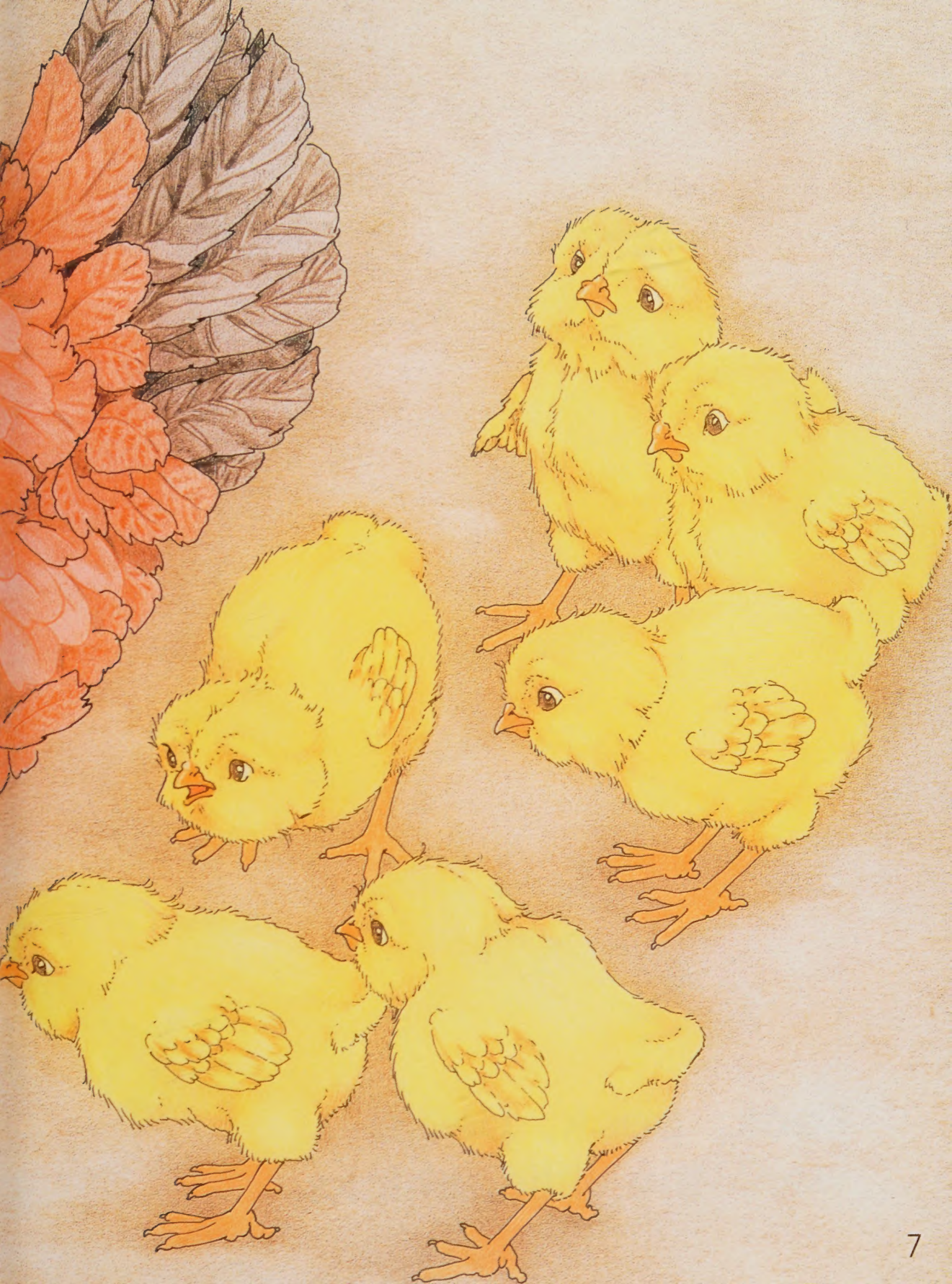






Peck, peck, peck  
went the mother hen.









**Peck, peck, peck  
went the little chicks.**









**Strut, strut, strut  
went the mother hen.**







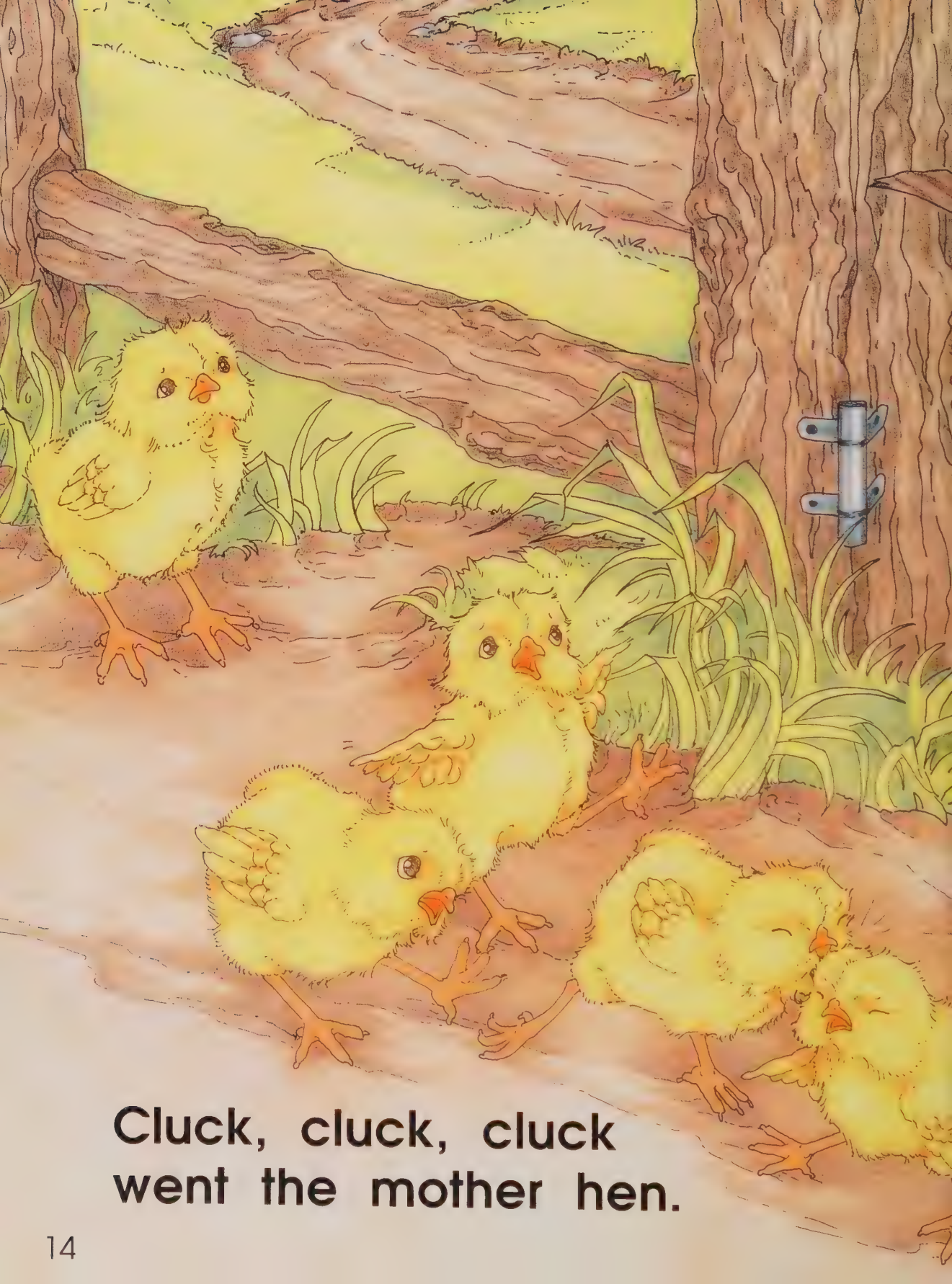


**Strut, strut, strut  
went the little chicks.**









**Cluck, cluck, cluck  
went the mother hen.**









**Peep, peep, peep  
went the little chicks.**



## Things to Know

Most chickens raised today come from huge poultry farms, but small farms often have chicken coops. A coop is where chickens roost, or retire, for the night. Female chickens, or hens, also make their nests there, though some prefer to sneak away and make nests elsewhere. A hen sitting on eggs is said to be brooding. Male chickens, or roosters, do not help raise the young, but they do guard the flock.

The hen incubates the eggs for twenty-one days. Inside each egg, a growing chick uses the yolk, white, and shell for nutrition. The shell is full of calcium, which helps form the chick's bones. It also has tiny holes in it, which allow air to pass through. On the twenty-first day, the chick pecks its way out, using a special egg tooth on the top of its beak to help it break the shell. The egg tooth falls off soon after hatching. The chick is weak and damp after it hatches. It is covered with fluffy feathers called *down*. This down soon dries, and the chick is able to walk, run, and find food for itself. Hens will cluck to let the chicks know where seeds, grain, and insects can be found. They guard their chicks carefully. Chicks nestle under the hen's wings for warmth and protection.

## Things to Do

- Invite the children to dramatize being chicks. Ask one child to be the mother hen. Encourage all the "chicks" to follow the motions of the mother hen. Have them practice strutting, pecking, and scratching.
- Use different objects to create the sounds of scratching, pecking, and strutting. For example, you might use sandpaper or a washboard to make scratching sounds, tap pencils to make pecking sounds, and beat a drum to suggest strutting.
- Discuss other types of baby animals and what their mothers teach them. Have the children write and illustrate stories of things they learned to do and who taught them. For example, you might use the following writing structure: "I learned to (tie my shoes). My (mother) taught me how."
- Have the children try picking up chicken feed (corn) with tweezers. Use the corn to do counting or patterning activities.
- Do science experiments with eggs. Test an egg to see if it is raw or hard-boiled by spinning it: raw eggs wobble, hard-boiled eggs spin smoothly. Test to see if an egg is fresh: fresh eggs sink in water, old eggs float.
- How do the children like their eggs cooked? (If the children ask, explain to them that the eggs they buy in the store do not have baby chicks growing in them. Hens lay many eggs throughout the year, but they incubate only a few, fertilized eggs.) Invite the children to draw their favorite cooked eggs. Use the illustrations to graph their favorites.
- Discuss the meanings of the phrases "light as a feather," "the early bird gets the worm," "last one in is a rotten egg," and "as scarce as hen's teeth."
- Read aloud one of the books in Roger Duvoisin's *Petunia* series, which stars Petunia the goose and her barnyard friends.





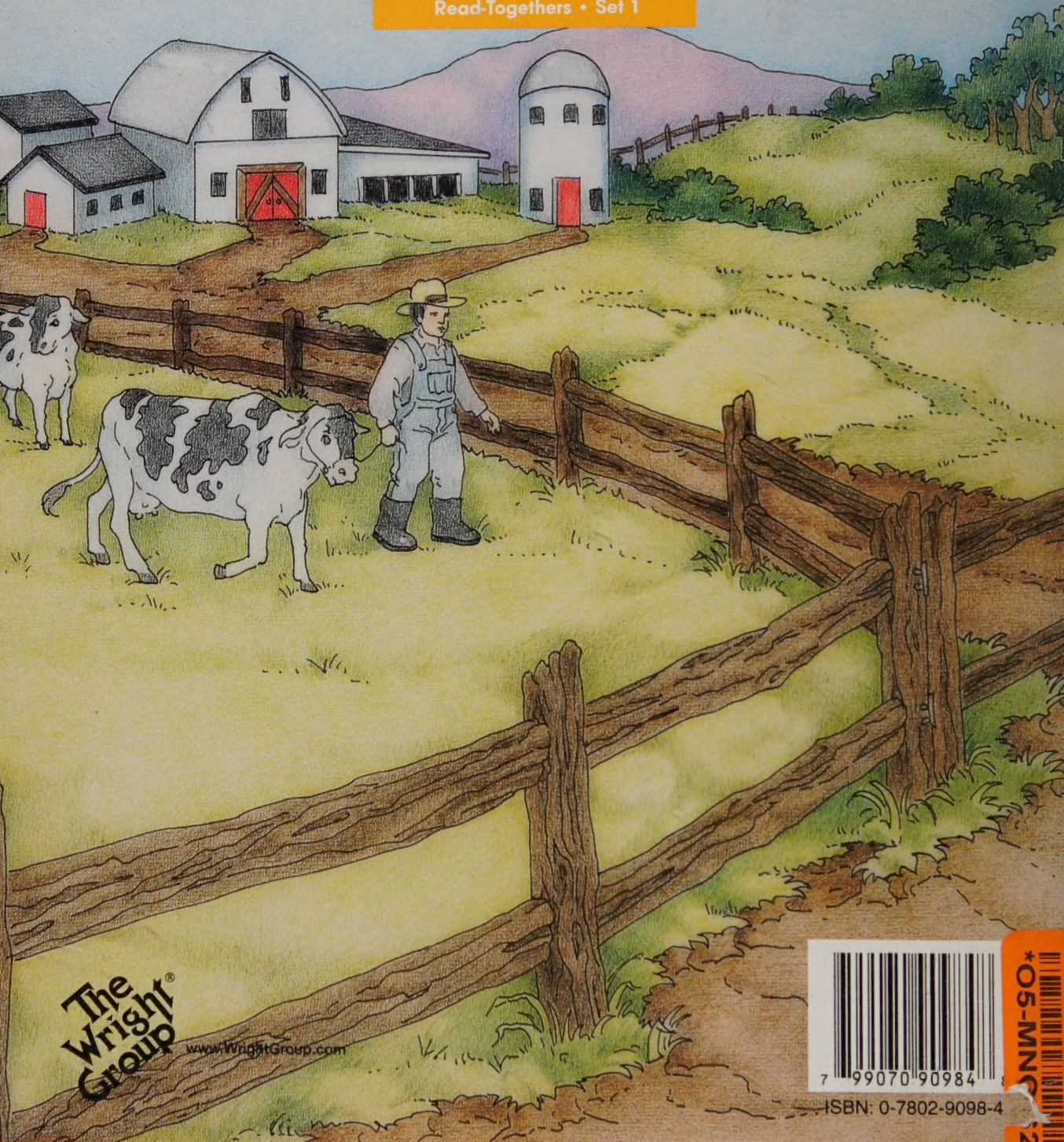
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